

Lagimodiere and their Descendants

1635 to 1885

By

Hector Coutu

Great Great Grandchild of
Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the descendants of Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere in hopes that it will enlighten you more fully on the past history of your ancestors.

A special note of thanks to Kathy Mandryk, typist and to my wife Suzanne, my daughter Annette and her husband Allan Brathwaite for the help they gave me in getting this book completed.

I also extend my sincerest appreciation to Terrance Lusty for the contribution he has made towards this genealogy of the Lagimodiere.

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INTRODUCTION

I was always interested in reading about our ancestors and the part they played in our Canadian history. For that information I had to look up dozens of books. So firstly, the purpose of this genealogy book is to put all the information in one booklet so that the Lagimodiere descendants can get a summary of their ancestors' achievements in a few hours of reading. Secondly, to acquaint all the descendants of the Lagimodieres, what part their ancestors have done to help build this great country of ours and what hardship and injustice they endured to meet that end. Especially the hanging of Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere's grandson Louis Riel Jr. in 1885 for his part in trying to help the settlers of the North West get their grievances settled by the McDonald government.

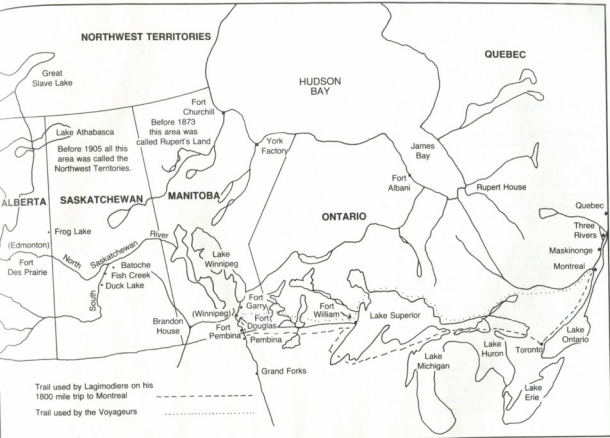
I hope this genealogy book gives you as much pleasure reading as I have had preparing it for you. It is a result of many years of travel and research. The text involved, is to convey more fully the life of our ancestors during the 1800's, something we should know and not forget. We have nothing to be ashamed of and I am sure you will be able to understand their contribution more fully after you have read this book thoroughly.

I am pleased to acknowledge with gratitude the assistance I received from many sources while preparing this genealogy. These include the Provincial Archives, Glenbow Institute, libraries and private individuals.

My wife and I have met lots of nice people during these interviews and were well received no matter where we went. We hope to meet many more after this genealogy book is published.

I know I have missed names that should have been included in this book. You must realize Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere had 8 children, 64 grand children and hundreds of great-grand children and so on down the line. It would almost make it impossible to contact every descendent unless you write and let me know after you see this book. If you are related to the Lagimodieres in any way, I am sure I will be able to help you find your place in this genealogy line, and I am really looking forward to helping you. For more information write:

Hector Coust
Brousseau, Alberta.
T0B 0P0



The Genealogy of the Lagimodiere

Noel Lecompte de la Vimaudiere was at Normandie France in 1635. He married Francoise Letelier at Normandie France in 1659. He died February 19th, 1703.

Their son Samuel de la Vimaudiere was born at St. Lo Normandie France in 1667 and Married Jeanne Jeremie at St. Nicolas Quebec on July 22nd, 1705. He had immigrated to Canada 1683. He died at St. Nicolas Quebec on June 30th, 1715.

Their son Joseph Lagimodiere was born on May 21st, 1707 at St. Nicolas Quebec and married Madeleine Jacque at Charlesbourg Quebec on February 20th, 1730. He died on August 24th, 1756 at St. Antoine de Chambly Quebec. (Note change of surname).

Their son Jean Baptiste was born on June 13th, 1740. He married Josephe Jarret Beauregard at St. Antoine sur la Richeleu Quebec. He died August 17th, 1821 at Maskinonge Quebec. She died on November 13th, 1788 at Maskinonge Quebec.

Their son Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere Jr. was born on December 26th, 1778 at Three Rivers Quebec. He married Marie Ann Gaboury on April 21st, 1806. He died on September 7th, 1855. She died on December 14th, 1875 in St. Boniface Manitoba at the age of 95,

They had a family of 8 Children and they are all listed in the first column on the next page.

Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere's Children.

Reine - Married - Joseph Lamerre and had a family of 2 Children.

Jean Baptiste - Married - Marie Harmon and had a family of 10 Children.

Romain - Married - Marie Vaudry and had a family of 9 Children.

Pauline - Married - Thomas Harrison and had a family of 12 Children.

Julie - Married - Louis Raf St. and had a family of 11 Children.

Ben - Married - Angélique Carrière and had a family of 2 Children.

Joseph - Married - Joseph Lupier and had a family of 8 Children.

Josette - Married - Amable Naah and had a family of 10 Children.

Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere's Grand Children.

Catherine - Married - David Joyal Joseph Jr. Joseph Jr.

Moise

Marie - Married - Noébert Landry

Marguerite - Married - Maxime Dumas

Eloise - Married - Sara Goulet

Marile - Married - Joseph McDougall

Josette - Married - Pierre Dumas

Elsa

Romain

Luigi - Married - Marie Brunseau

Marie Ann - Married - Pierre Cyr

Modeste - Married - Adélade Brunseau

Romain - Married - Julie McNab

Joseph - Married - Isabelle Cyr

Helen - Married - Vergine McDougall

Alphonse - Married - Henri Diagnezch

Mary Cath. - Married - Pierre Henri Couss

William Daniel

August - Married - Lucy Champagne

Delphia - Married - Elie Cyr

Marie Ann - Married - Charles Nolin

Dumas - Married - Helene Jerome

Catherine - Married - Judore Hoppa

Josque - Married - Euchariste Perreault

Melanie - Married - Octave Perreault

Philomene - Married - Joseph Champagne

Caroline - Married - Duncan Nolin

Suzanne

Edward - Married - Caroline Carroz

Joseph - Married - Marie Nolin

Elise

Philomene

Honoreette - Married - Jean Marie Poira

Alexandre - Married - Elie Poira

Marie

Eulalie - Married - William Gladue

Octavie - Married - Louis Lavallee

Sara - Sister Marguerite Marie

Charles

Jean - Married - Amanda Perreault

Louis Jr. - Married - Marguerite Belhumeur

Céleste - Married - Octave Allard

Cécile - Married - Eleonore

Madeux - Married - Catherine Larivière

Joseph - Married - Veronique Blanchette

Marie - Married - Ben Boivez

Veronique - Married - Joseph Latendré

Pauline - Married - Honore Aumont

Elie - Married - Alfred Adolphe

Jean Baptiste - Married - Angélique Azare

Josette - Married - Pierre Lefleur

Boniface - Married - Christine Landry

Boniface - Married - Christine Landry

Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere's Great Grand Children (Known to date).

Sara Jeanne - Married - Joseph Blenath

William - Married - Lucy Glendon

Michel - Married - Clara Pelletier

Lucy - Married - Alphonse Pelletier

Eliu - Married - Philp Sadova

Helene - Married - Maxime Dubraut

Annie - Married - Odile Ferland

Joseph - Married - Emma Martin

Eleonore - Married - Dalysse Larence

Eloise - Married - Marie Lambert

Marguerite - Married - Philp Desjarlais

Alphonse - Married - Jean Larence

Pierre Daniel - Married - Marie Chaboyer

Joseph Raphael

George Philas - Married - Rosalie Cyr

Alexandre - Married - Rosalie Chaboyer

Victor - Married - Marie Lavallee

William - Married - Marguerite Lavallee

Eloise - Married - Marie Dumas

Paul Henri

Paul Albert - Married - Emilia Theroux

Ovide Edouard

Marie Agnes Amanda

Roderick Michel

Edouard Ovide

Charles Rodolick - Married - Alice Gaudry

Laura Emeline Rose

Louis Henri

Charles Edmond

Francis Xavier

Ursule Clarine

Marie Ann Blanche - Married - A. Delesse

Marie Ann Blanche - Married - A. Delesse

Jean - Married - Laura Caizex

Angélique

Joseph

Joseph - Married - Febronie Normand

Andre - Married - Alice Lafontaine

Napoleon was born on April 19th 68

Melanie - Married - Alex Gladue

Mario - Married - Della Nadon

Alfred - Married - Lea Element

Viviane - Married - Alfred Aubertin

Eleonore - Married - Jean Terrault

Vergine was born February 22/1862

Godfrey born in St. Boniface

Daniel born on August 19th/1874

Céleste - Married - Alfred Naah

**Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere
Marie Ann Gaboury**

Head of family: Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere

His Father: Jean Baptiste Sr.

His Mother: Josephite Beauregard

Birth Date: December 26th, 1778

Place: Three Rivers Quebec

Residence: St. Boniface, Manitoba

Occupation: Hunter, Trapper and Voyageur

Death Date: September 7th, 1855

Place: St. Boniface, Manitoba

Cemetery: St. Boniface Cathedral Cemetery

His wife: Marie Ann Gaboury

Her Father: Charles

Her Mother: Marie Ann Tessier

Birth Date: August 15th, 1780

Place: Maskinonge, Quebec

Marriage: April 21st, 1806

Place: Maskinonge, Quebec

Death Date: December 14th, 1875

Place: St. Boniface, Manitoba

Cemetery: St. Boniface Cathedral's Cemetery

Their Family

<i>Birth Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Marriage Date</i>
Jan. 6, 1807	Reine	May 12th, 1880	Joseph Lamere	1822
1808	Jean Baptiste	Sept. 10, 1886	Marie Harrison	June 8, 1829
1810	Josette	Feb. 24, 1867	Emable Nault	1825
1811	Bengemen		Angelique Carriere	1834
1813	Pauline	Sept. 1865	Thomas Harrison	1835
Jan. 11, 1818	Romain	March 14, 1905	Marie Vaudry	1841
Aug. 26, 1820	Julie	Jan. 21, 1889	Louis Riel Jr.	Jan. 21, 1844
Dec. 20, 1825	Joseph		Josephite Lupier	1845

JEAN BAPTISTE LAGIMODIERE

Hunter, Trapper, Voyageur

Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere, son of Jean Baptiste Sr. and Josephite Beaugard was born at Three Rivers, Quebec, on December 26th, 1778. His mother died when he was ten years old. He was brought up by his aunt Marie-Josephite Lagimodiere. He did not have too much education as schools were very scarce at that time. He spent his junior years trapping around the vicinity of his aunt's farm. At the age of twenty-one he thought this life too dull, so he got on with the North West Trading Company as a voyageur. The first year he only went to Fort William and came back to spend the winter with his aunt at Verchere, Quebec.

The following spring he went back to work with the old crew, whom he had worked with the year before, but this time he kept on going west to the Red River Settlement (in the vicinity of Winnipeg today) and the next five years he

travelled the rivers and lakes of Western Canada as far west as the Rocky Mountains.

In the summer of 1805 he worked his way back to his native province of Quebec and arrived back there in January of 1806. That was when he met Marie Ann Gaboury, fell in love with her and on April 21st, 1806 took her as his wife. That changed his carefree lifestyle quite a bit. But he agreed to take her back with him when she insisted not to be left behind to worry if he would ever come back to her.

Jean Baptiste was a free man out west. He trapped on his own and dealt with either of the Trading Companies. He was very trustworthy and often went on secret missions for them.

In the fall of 1815 Jean Baptiste announced to his wife Marie Ann that he was to be away for a longer time than

usual. But before telling of his journey and the hardships he had to endure, we must speak of the events which were taking place in the Red River between the two trading companies.

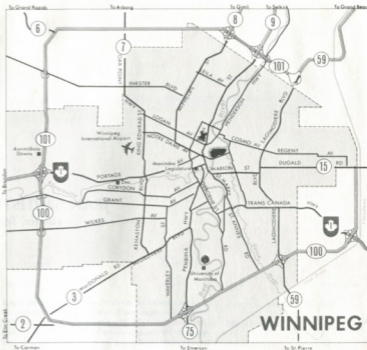
The North West Company founded in 1784 by a society of Montreal merchants had always been, since its incorporation, antagonistic to the Hudson Bay Company, its rival in the fur trade of Western Canada. Whenever one company built a fort, the other hastened to erect one of its own beside it and each tried to secure the most furs. In the years 1806 and 1807 the shares of the Hudson Bay Company were a far better investment than those of the North West Company which in 1803 was at the height of its success. At that time a Scotch nobleman Thomas Douglas, Lord Selkirk, came to Montreal to inquire into the state of affairs of the two companies. On returning to England he bought almost half the shares of the Hudson Bay Company which had fallen as low as 60% after having been as high as 250%.

The capital of the Hudson Bay Company was £100,000 sterling. Lord Selkirk bought shares to the amount of £40,000. One can judge what effect this would have on the Company. Encouraged by the success of his first speculation he formed the design of monopolizing the exclusive trade of all the territories of the North West for the Hudson Bay Company. He knew after the explanation he had received at Montreal that a Company, having no other to compete with it, would realize a colossal fortune by the fur trade. For this reason he invested a lot of capital in the company and bought a large tract of land on the banks of the Red River and announced that he intended to form a colony of settlers there.

Lord Selkirk's aim in founding this settlement on the Red River was not simply to form an agricultural establishment but to ensure the new colonists' assistance against the North West Trading Company to enable him to ruin its commerce.

He pretended that the Hudson Bay Company, under the virtue of the charter which had been granted to it by Charles II in 1670, had the exclusive right of fishing and hunting not only on the shores of the Hudson Bay but all over the North West from the Rocky Mountains up to the frozen seas of the far north.

The rivalry between the two companies became serious upon the arrival of the first colony in 1812 and continued to



- Parcel of land Lord Selkirk gave Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere in 1816, for his history making 1800 mile walk to Montreal.
- X Location of Pierre Heurt Coste's Butcher shop he operated in 1865.
- Louis Riel's home and Flour mill in 1844.



Picture courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company

The arrival of Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere at the house of Lord Selkirk at Montreal, with dispatches from the Red River, after a journey of over five months. He started out on this history making trip on October 17th, 1811 arrived in Montreal on March 10th, 1816.

rage until 1821 at which time they were united under the name of the Hudson Bay Company

Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere had always been in the service of both companies, but he hunted and trapped on his own account and sold his furs as often to one as to the other. However, after he married Marie Ann, he spent most of the long winters in the Hudson Bay Company's Fort and he always showed himself in favor of this company.

In March 1815, two of the North West Company's Forts were taken over by the Hudson Bay Company and their provisions, merchandise and furs contained therein were also taken, to Fort Douglas. The traders and employees were held prisoners and all their papers confiscated. The couriers bringing letters from eastern Canada for either company were stopped and their letters intercepted by the other company.

The agent of the North West Company in order to deter their enemies, stopped the Hudson Bay Company's couriers and held them prisoners in their forts. It was therefore very difficult to send letters from Red River to Montreal since the distance to travel through was over 1800 miles and to avoid passing enemy posts placed like steps of a ladder along the route, it was necessary to take great detours, cut across swamps, cross lakes and rivers passing by an inhabited parts of the country so not to be seen.

Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere was asked by the Governor of Fort Douglas to carry letters to Lord Selkirk in Montreal. In 1815 the Governor requested him to come to the Fort and asked him if he could go with letters to Montreal without being stopped on the way. Jean Baptiste, accustomed to a wild life, could defy the clevered Indian in finding his way on a long voyage; he had a very quick eye which served him in finding his way better than the best compass.

Jean Baptiste replied that he could go to Montreal and that he would make every effort to deliver the letters personally to Lord Selkirk as soon as possible.

The season was well advanced and the intrepid messenger realized that he had to get going right away if he was to get through before the end of winter. He made preparation to leave within three days. First he had to make reservations for his family while he was gone, it could be a long hard winter. The Governor told him to bring his family and wife to the fort where they would be lodged and fed until his return from Montreal. Marie Ann therefore left the hut on

the banks of the Assiniboine to become an inmate of Fort Douglas.

Jean Baptiste left Fort Douglas on October 17, 1815. All he took for his historical trip was his gun, snare wire, hatchet and blanket. All he took with him was his usual hunting gear needed for a short hunting trip so that nobody would suspect that he was going on this errand. He walked east towards Red Lake for the first few days. He met Indians and was able to get the use of a horse and promised to leave it at a further Indian camp. By the time he got there he was glad to abandon the horse because the snow was getting so deep that he was better off using snowshoes. He rested in the camp with the Indians for a few days while he made himself a pair of snowshoes. From then on he had to travel lightly. His only means of getting food was setting snares at night and hoping that something was caught in them by morning. He could not use his gun because somebody might hear the shot and intercept his journey. Orders were out by the North West Company not to let anybody go by without first being brought in for questioning.

When he reached Fort William he was running out of food. As we stated before he could not pass too close for fear of being detected, but he did get close enough in the cover of darkness to lure a small dog to him. He killed it with his hatchet and took it a short distance away, skinned it and had enough food till he reached the shores of Lake Superior. At that time of the year game was scarce as he trudged on snowshoes along the south shore of the lake. So for these weeks his ration was fish that he caught through the ice and trippe (a moss which grows on rocks which was very nutritious).

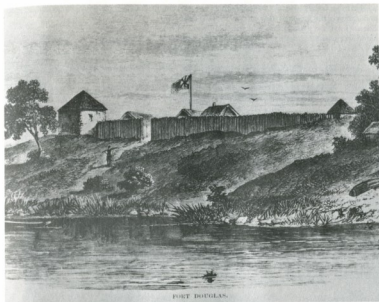
When he reached Toronto, he took a well deserved rest as he was getting weak from the hard journey he had endured till now. From this place on, travelling was much easier because this area was inhabited and he had no more fear of being captured by the men of the North West Company. They had no Forts in this area and nobody knew who he was or that he had important letters to be delivered to Lord Selkirk.

He finally reached Montreal on March 10th, 1816, five months after his departure from Fort Douglas. He went directly to Lord Selkirk's home.

History tells us of a gaunt and ragged man dressed in the buckskin cloth of the far off frontier who knocked at Lord Selkirk's house late one night. There was a dance in prog-



For his faithful service to the Hudson's Bay Company, Jean Baptiste was awarded this parcel of land at the forks of the Red River and the Seine, in the center of the City of Winnipeg. He was the first to legally own land in Western Canada. In 1816, with the help of his friends he built his first home and lived there till his death in 1855. In 1882 the C.P.R. paid close to One Hundred Thousand Dollars for part of this parcel of land.



FORT DOUGLAS.

The Hudson Bay Post at Fort Douglas where the city of Winnipeg is today. This is where Jean Baptiste started his long journey to Montreal to deliver letters to Lord Selkirk during the winter of 1816.

Courtesy of the Manitoba Archives

ress. He told the doorman that he had letters to deliver to the Lord if he would let him in. The doorman said, "Give me these letters and I'll deliver them to him." "No", Jean Baptiste said, "I have walked 1800 miles to deliver these to Lord Selkirk personally and I will give them to him myself. Tell him I'm a messenger from the Red River and he'll gladly see me right away."

"Bring him in to me right away", the Lord ordered the doorman. At a glance Lord Selkirk knew that he was a man from the North West. Jean Baptiste said, "I promised Collin Robertson from Fort Douglas that I would deliver you these important letters personally if at all humanly possible and now that I have handed them to you, my mission has been accomplished."

Lord Selkirk thanked him very much for his trouble and ordered the doorman to get him a room, clean clothes and give him all the conveniences he needed during his stay in Montreal. He told Jean Baptiste that he would draft some replies and as soon as he was rested up, he would send Jean Baptiste back with replies for Collin Robertson.

After a couple weeks rest in Montreal, he departed on his way back to Red River with notes for the Governor of the Fort. Lord Selkirk assured him that he would travel himself to the Red River in early spring to settle these misunderstandings between the two rival companies. He would also recruit a small army to guarantee protection for the settlers of his new colony.

Meanwhile in Fort Douglas, things were going out of control. About four o'clock in the afternoon of June 9th, 1816, a sentinel at Fort Douglas brought word to the Governor that a number of people on horseback were passing in view of the Fort at a safe distance. This band of horsemen did not appear to be animated by hostile intentions as they had already passed Fort Douglas and were directing their course down the river. The Governor suspected that they were North West Company people and that their aim was to meet the canoes lower down the river in order to carry off the supplies and as this was what he wished to prevent, orders were immediately given to the men who were armed to start in pursuit and if possible cut off their passage and force them to turn back. When these Metis saw the Governor and his men approaching they sent an envoy to ask what they wanted and why they were being followed. As these discussions were going on, either through malice or impudence, a gun went off and one of the halfbreeds was

wounded. At this moment the halfbreeds lost their cool and the battle was on. At this moment Metis accustomed to shooting from horseback while hunting the buffalo, charged the enemy and in a very few minutes twenty lay dead including the Governor himself. The Hudson Bay Company upon hearing of this disaster, the news of which was almost immediately brought to the Fort, believed that the Metis would attack the post and that they would all be massacred.

The following day the North West Company men took the Fort without further loss of life. The prisoners and a number of colonists were loaded in canoes and sent to Jack Fish River, a North West Company Fort, further east towards eastern Canada.

Luckily Madame Lagimodiere and her family were taken away by their Indian friends the day before or she would have been taken prisoner also.

On his way back to Red River, Jean Baptiste was not so careful of being apprehended seeing that he was not carrying quite so important notes, he was travelling the easier routes, but he did not know that the North West Trading Company had a price on his head. Everybody was on the watch for his capture. Just before he got to Fort William, a group of Indians eager to collect the ransom, surprised him in his sleep one night and took him prisoner. Before turning him in, they robbed him of all his belongings, including gifts Lord Selkirk had given him for his wife and children. Then they beat him senseless and when he came to, he was in the North West Company's fort at Fort William. This was the 19th of June, eighty days after he had left Montreal on his long trip back home.

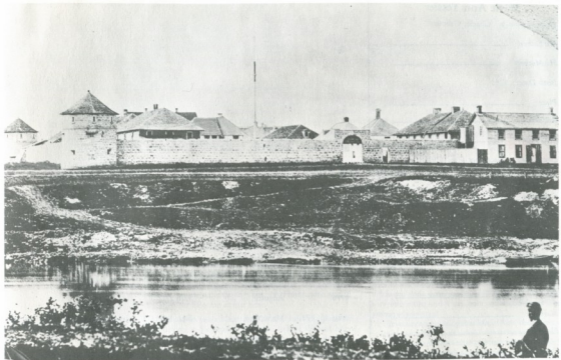
There he was locked up in a small cave in the bank of a hill. He was fed once a day through a crack between the large logs of the front of this cave. Through that hole was the only ventilation or light that he got during his fifty-six day confinement. He had to do his necessary in the corner of this dirt hut. (I guess this was why this dungeon was called the "butter vat".)

He was freed by Lord Selkirk's troops on August 13th. It took him a few days to get mobile again, before he hit the trail back home to Red River, all this time wondering what had happened to his wife and family. As we will see later, they did not have it easy either, but all was forgotten when they were reunited in early September 1816. He was very glad to see them all well.

Lord Selkirk gave him and his family all the assistance

needed to get started over again. He gave him a piece of land at the forks of the Siene and the Red River to build their new home. (In 1882 a piece of that land was sold by one of his sons for one hundred thousand dollars.) He also gave him a large tent for his family to live in until their new house was built.

Lord Selkirk spent the rest of the summer at the Red River Colony and when he departed in the fall Jean Baptiste personally escorted him to the American border, bade him good-bye never to see him again. Lord Selkirk was not a well man and died a few years after his departure.



Upper Fort Garry, 1872, where the present city of Winnipeg now stands.

Courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company

**Charles Gaboury
Marie Ann Tessier**

Head of family: Charles Gaboury

His Father: _____

His Mother: _____

Birth Date: 1743

Place: _____

Residence: _____

Occupation: _____

Death Date: December 17th, 1792

Place: _____

Cemetery: _____

His wife: Marie Ann Tessier

Her Father: _____

Her Mother: _____

Birth Date: _____

Place: _____

Marriage: _____

Place: _____

Death Date: _____

Place: _____

Cemetery: _____

Other Marriage: Jean Baptiste Mainguay

Their Family

<i>Birth Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Marriage Date</i>
1772	Pierre			
1773	Marie Madeliene			
1774	Madeliene	1774		
1776	Augustin	1786		
Aug. 15, 1780	Marie Ann	Dec. 14, 1875	Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere	Apr. 21, 1806
Nov. 6, 1782	Marie Elizabeth			
1784	Jean Marie			
1786	Judith			
1788	Augustin			
1791	Joseph Isaac			

MARIE ANN

The first legally married white women to live in Western Canada

Marie Ann Gaboury, the daughter of Marie Tessier and Charles Gaboury was born in Makinonge, Quebec, in the Diocese of Three Rivers, on November 6, 1782. She was baptized on the same day by Rev. N. Finfret who was in charge of the Diocese at that time.

For eleven years Marie Ann lived a quiet and peaceful life working at the priest's residence, where she had been employed since the age of fourteen, without the least suspicion that the years which were to follow would bring such incredible change in her life.

During the winter of 1806, a young Canadian named Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere, who had just spent the last five years in Western Canada, came back to his home province in Quebec to visit his friends and relatives at Maskinonge.

What a sensation was created in the parish by the arrival

of this voyageur from the far off country. Everybody came to see him and listen to his stories. He had many wonderful tales to tell. Everybody was fascinated by the stories of the unknown wide open spaces of Western Canada. This was very interesting and what more could one desire from this young adventurer?

It was not surprising that Marie Ann, then twenty-four years of age, asked permission from her employer, to attend an evening gathering to meet and hear tales from this young adventurer. It was at this party that she became acquainted with Jean Baptiste and allowed herself to be charmed by him.

During that time Jean Baptiste had not told anyone that he planned on returning to the wilds of Western Canada. All his friends thought that the five years adventure amongst the Indians was enough to take away the taste for more travell-

ing and that from now on he would gladly settle down to a quieter life of farming amongst his family and friends.

Marie Ann was also convinced of this in her own mind, so when Jean Baptiste asked her hand in marriage she accepted. They were married in the Roman Catholic Church at Three Rivers, Quebec on April 21, 1806.

Up to that time everything went well. Nevertheless the spring brought with it a longing for the open spaces for Jean Baptiste which nothing could eradicate. Towards the beginning of June Mr. Lagimodiere made known to his wife that he intended to leave immediately to go back to Western Canada. The news was a sharp blow to Marie Ann, however, she did not allow herself to be too much depressed by it. She believed that the force of circumstances and prayer would finally turn her husband's plans to leave his new home to go back to the hard life which he had endured in the past five years. But after having explained to him the strongest and most convincing reasons, she could see that nothing would change his mind. It was too late to impose conditions, there were but two alternatives, either she must allow her husband to go alone, possibly never seeing him again for many years, perhaps never, or accompanying him into the barbarous country to share during the remainder of her life his fatigue, discomforts and dangers.

The Missionaries had not yet penetrated that land to carry into it the light of faith. The Indians in these immense territories were still living in darkness; the aspect of things temporal were not much more smiling, she would be obliged to follow a nomadic existence like the Indians during the years to come. She could easily see the civilization would not reach this part of Canada for a long time yet. However, after having examined every point well, without making a flattering picture of it, she went to see her pastor with her plans. He told Marie Ann that in spite of all consideration she felt herself courageous and strong enough to go to Western Canada, she should follow her husband rather than let him go alone, with the prospect of never seeing him again.

When she broke the news to her husband of her decision, he tried to change her mind. But Marie Ann had her mind made up. She told her husband that there will be a first white woman to go west some day and she might as well be the one.

So in June 1806 Jean Baptiste and his new bride left for Three Rivers, Quebec, on the most adventurous honeymoon in Canadian history. From there they went to Lachine



Marie Ann and Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere being greeted by the Indians on their arrival at Fort Williams in 1806.

Courtesy of the Glendon Institute

not far from Montreal to await the departure of the canoes by which they intended to travel to western Canada.

Each spring as soon as the rivers were free of ice, canoes were loaded with merchandise for fur trading and provisions for the employees at the Forts of the trading companies and started on their way to the west. These canoes were manned by men called "voyageurs" hired throughout the towns and villages for the services of the powerful North West Trading Company. Many of these men liked the free life of the west so much that they never did come back to their native province of Quebec.

Marie Ann had no companions of her own sex with her. She embarked in the canoe with her husband, to whom alone she trusted for protection. She began from the first day, her apprenticeship to the mode of life which she was henceforth to lead for more than twelve years with the exception of the few times when she was lodged with her children in the forts belonging to the trading companies. We are told that until 1818 she lived in a tent ninety percent of the time.

During the trip Marie Ann did not have to handle the oars or have to carry heavy burdens on her shoulders like the men, nevertheless she found it very tiring to spend the whole day sitting in the bottom of the canoe without being able to move for fear of tipping the canoe over. All day she would be exposed to the hot sun, wind and rain, then when the night came, to sleep on the shores of the lake or river on the bare ground wrapped in a blanket.

After leaving Lachine, Quebec, the canoes went to St. Anne, a place about two miles down the river from Montreal. The guides considered the trip started from this place. This was the location where all canoes going west met. The next day Marie Ann bade farewell to Quebec forever. They launched their canoes one by one till everybody was on their way. These men were hired to work from Lachine to Fort William on the west end of Lake Superior. Each canoe was rowed by eighteen men and was under the orders of onemaster. It took eight men to carry a canoe on their shoulders between lakes. All the merchandise and provisions which formed the cargo of a canoe were put in bales weighing from eighty to ninety pounds. From Lachine to Lake Huron they had to make twenty-six portages. This will give you an idea of what these voyageurs had to go through on a trip like this. In spite of the difficulties of such a journey up to the entrance of Lake Superior, this was reached without any mishaps. This lake as you all know, is a large inland lake, which

today is navigated by large ocean liners. When these great sheets of water are stirred up by violent winds, navigation becomes dangerous for ocean going vessels, just imagine the danger they would face with their overloaded canoes if a storm hit them without warning.

They got caught in two terrible storms before crossing the bay. During the last one, one canoe capsized and two of the men were lost including the cargo. Marie Ann, many years after, told her children of the moral fears which she had felt on that occasion and with what fervour she had prayed to God to see that she and her husband be saved from these icy waters of Lake Superior. What would she have done if her husband would have perished at that time?

After a month of travelling the voyageurs arrived at Fort William, which was little more than half way to their destination. But the worst of the trip was over with. The route to Lake Winnipeg was made as much on land as on water. The canoes used for this part of the journey were made smaller than the ones used on the first part of their trip, because the men had to carry their canoes and supplies on their backs most of the time. They finally arrived at Lake Winnipeg on the first week of July and paddled their canoes up the river to Fort Pembina where they intended to spend a quiet and restful winter.

Before the trip east Jean Baptiste had spent four years at Pembina. He had left behind an Indian woman whom he had lived with at that time. One can imagine the grief it would have been for his wife had she found out about this. He had hoped to keep his secret from her.

After paddling up the river for four days they arrived at Fort Pembina. Jean Baptiste put up his tent close to the fort to be ready for the hunting season.

There were six Canadian hunters living near the fort who had married Indian women. The living habits of these men were not different from that of the Indians. They lived in tents made of buffalo hides and lived on pemmican (dried meat) and this was supplemented by whatever they could trap during the winter months. They all camped around the fort and spent the winter hunting and trapping in the surrounding area. These Indian wives of the Canadians were the only women that Marie Ann had to visit with. They could not speak French so their conversation was mostly by sign.

Jean Baptiste, like other Canadians as we already stated, had taken a squaw for a wife during the four years he

had spent in the west. He had left this woman a year before his trip back to eastern Canada and she had remained near the fort with her family and friends, hoping to see Jean Baptiste come back to her some day. When he came back she still regarded him as her legal husband, returning with a wife she was very jealous of and vowed to avenge injuries on Madame Lagimodiere.

It was commonly believed amongst the Canadians that these Indians, were heathens and had certain potions which they could prepare and give to their enemies in order to bewitch them. Invocations were made to their Gods over this preparation to help them in bringing evil upon their enemies and many people living amongst them assured us that these beverages succeeded in producing these desired effect.

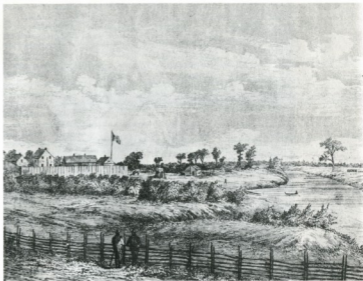
Jean Baptiste's former wife tried to hide her jealousy by a show of friendship and under these false appearances, came every day to visit Madame Lagimodiere in her tent. Marie Ann, ignorant of the relation which had existed between her husband and this woman, had no suspicion of any evil intentions hidden beneath her kindness.

Happily the squaw had confided her intentions to the wife of one of the Canadians who lived nearby. This woman hastened to tell Marie Ann of the danger which menaced her, advising at the same time to leave the place with her husband as soon as possible and not return, at least till this woman gave up her plan of harming Marie Ann.

Jean Baptiste who knew of the jealousy and thirst of vengeance which these Indians nursed in their hearts, took down his tent immediately and left to a place they called Grand Camp, some distance north of Fort Pembina.

Mr. & Mrs. Lagimodiere moved back to spend the winter closer to the fort, as Marie Ann was expecting a baby shortly. They were lucky to find a small vacant house inside the fort and it was in this hut that on Jan. 6, 1807, their first child was born. This day usually so happy for most mothers, was a sad and sorrowful one for Marie Ann, as she was the only one of her kin to celebrate the arrival of her first child. At least history was made when she gave birth to the first white child to be born in Western Canada. As it was a girl and she was born on the King's birthday 'Le jour des Roi), she called her Reine.

Marie Ann remained in the fort till May. Her husband spent most of the time hunting. That was the only way a man could feed himself and his family during these long winter



Fort Pembina where Reine Lagimodiere was born on January 6th, 1807, the first white child born in Western Canada.

months. There was a lot of game at that time of the year, but a hunter still had to go out and get it when the weather was good to have some ahead for bad times.

When the beautiful spring days finally arrived and the rivers were free of ice, Jean Baptiste announced to his wife that he intended to go up the Saskatchewan River in the company of three Canadians who had spent the winter with them at Pembina. All these men were married to women of the Cree tribe. Having bought two canoes large enough to carry their wives and provisions for the trip they set out on their journey on May 30, 1807.

Their canoes coasted quietly down the river towards Lake Winnipeg. Then they followed the shore of the lake till they reached the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. On this trip Marie Ann's luggage was reduced to the smallest possible amount. As for food, they lived off the land for meat and out of the lake for fresh fish. Many people would enjoy a trip like that today, but most of the times they were not so lucky during the long winter months.

She carried her child in a moss bag like the Indian women did. That was the only habit that she copied from the Indians for the sixty years she spent with them in the west.

After some weeks of travelling they arrived at Cumberland House at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. There they stayed a short time for a rest. A large number of Indians were camped around the fort trading with the company. The news had travelled in advance that a party was to arrive with a white woman soon. This was a great event that nobody wanted to miss. Indians wondered if she was going to be different from their squaws, was she kind or wicked and would she be able to talk with them?

One of the Canadians by the name of Belgrade had reached the fort ahead of his companions and told the Indians that this French lady was good but she was learned in medicine and that if anyone offended her she had the power to cause their death by merely looking at them. In a short time the whole camp had been told of this wonderful peculiarity and all were determined to do their best to gain this woman's best attention. When Marie Ann arrived in camp, every one tried to impress her the best they could. They crowded all around her giving her presents and trying to touch her. Others just sat around and just stared at her.

Marie Ann was far from being without charm, her features were regular and her skin was very white compared to theirs.

After a week's rest they continued their journey towards Fort of the Prairies (Edmonton as it is called today). One night as they were camping they had tied their canoes to some trees on the banks of the river and made a camp fire nearby. After supper the men were chatting as they sat on some fallen trees. Another man named Bouvier, who had joined them from Cumberland House, sat alone on the other side of the fire. A little distance away Marie Ann and the other women were washing dishes and putting away the left over food, when all of a sudden Bouvier let out a cry of distress and called for help. At the first shout Jean Baptiste grabbed his gun and prepared to defend them against would be attackers. He hurried to the other side of the fire to see what was the matter with Bouvier, where he saw a big mother bear dragging him away in the bush. She was dragging him by one paw and pounding him in the face with the other. As soon as she saw Jean Baptiste in pursuit she doubled her fury against her prey, tearing at his face with her claws. Jean Baptiste who was a good hunter, bated her with the butt of his gun to make her let go of her hold as he dared not shoot for fear of killing the man he was trying to save. But Bouvier who felt himself practically killed anyway, yelled "I'd rather be shot than torn apart alive."

Jean Baptiste pulled the trigger of the gun as close to the bear as possible so as not to hurt Mr. Bouvier if possible. In his quest he wounded the beast enough to make her let go of her prey and made a dash for Jean Baptiste, who was expecting this and as his gun was a single shot ran towards the canoe where he had another fully loaded gun. He grabbed it just before the bear got to him and now without fear of wounding his companion Jean Baptiste aimed at her breast and killed her instantly.

As soon as the bear was no longer to be feared, Marie Ann who had been trembling with fear during this whole episode, rushed to Bouvier's side. The bear had torn the skin from his face with her claws from the roots of his hair to the side of his chin. He was in a terrible condition but he was not dead. She dressed his wounds as well as the circumstances would permit and thus, crippled, he was transported to the Fort of the Prairies, Marie Ann taking care of him all the way. In time his wounds healed but he was blind to the end of his life. He lived there for many years but when the first missionaries arrived in the Red River in 1818 he was persuaded to go and live in St Boniface with the priests. He ended his days in the Bishop's residence. He employed his

time in making crosses and crucifixes, blind as he was, and he did wonderful work.

To return to our travellers, they resumed their journey the following day arriving at their destination towards the end of August. Jean Baptiste had spent a few years there before and was well acquainted with the Chief factor, Mr. Bird. So he got a place for himself and his family in the fort for the winter.

This fort was the most important place in the west at that time, being the great meeting place for the Indians. All the Indian tribes met here. When all these different bands assembled around the fort, they were the cause of great fear for the factor and his employees who regarded them as sometimes troublesome. More than one battle took place in which blood was shed and more than one combatant met his death. The men who were in charge of the fort had need of invincible courage and strength to cope with these problems. They had to be ruled by fear just like we tame wild animals by exerting pressure on them.

One time the Factor at Fort Des Prairies was left alone at the post with only one servant, all other employees being absent on other business. A band of Blackfeet who were camped a short distance from the place, decided under the cover of night to make the factor open the gate of the fort and provide them with tobacco and whiskey. Knowing that the factor had only one man with him, they thought it would be very easy to intimidate him by their numbers and never doubted that they could persuade him to give them whatever they asked for. They gathered around the main gate of the fort and called for assistance. The servant aroused by the calls, went to see what they wanted. He opened a small shutter through which he could see what they were up to at that late hour of the night. At once he noticed the affair might be serious. The factor being already in bed for the night, he told the Indians to wait and he would go and call the factor to come and talk to them.

On each side of the entrance there was a tower supplied with a cannon loaded with bullets, they only had to light the fuses and fire them to make the Indians dance. The factor told the servant, "Go in the tower, take the bullets out, leaving only the charge of powder and I will do the same on the other side. When I yell fire, light the fuse and sit back and watch." All that time the Indians waited patiently at the gates, believing that they would soon be let in. When the

two guns went off at the same time, the Indians who had never heard a bang like that before, lost their wits. They were so startled that they turned around in disarray towards their camps without even looking back to see what had happened. The Factor, triumphant, put his head out of the window and yelled, "Wait! Wait! I have some more for you if you want more." They disappeared and seemed quite satisfied with their experiences for the night.

On another occasion one of the neighboring forts was the scene of a frightful occurrence. The employees had left the fort one morning to take provisions to another trading post and the Factor named Kite was left alone. During the day Indians, who were camped on the other side of the river, sent a young Indian to get a few supplies. When the Factor had given this lad what he needed, he patted him on the head in a friendly manner never thinking that the lad would take umbrage to this familiar demonstration. As soon as he got to camp the youth became ill. He told his family about the pat on the head and right away they decided that this was what caused his illness. Shortly after he died. The Indians concluded that the Factor had put a curse on the boy which caused his death. The next morning at day break the Indians crossed the river in great numbers and gaining entrance by force, flung themselves on the Factor with their knives and chopped him to death. They then robbed the fort of all they could carry. When the Canadians who had left a couple days before were returning without the least suspicion of danger, an old French half breed woman who lived with the tribe, knowing that they would be massacred as soon as they set foot in the fort, tried to save their lives without endangering her own. She rushed to a small island above the fort to stop the voyageurs before they got home, but unfortunately it was too late in the evening to notice her waving at them as they paddled by. As soon as they reached the fort, the Indians killed them all and took flight.

Tourangeau, a French half breed arrived at the fort the next day and was wondering what was wrong when nobody came out to greet him as he arrived. He went directly to the fort to see what was the cause of all the silence. The first object to meet his eye was the corpse of one of the Canadians who had been stabbed to death. When he got inside he found the bodies of the rest of his companions who had met the same fate. In the storeroom he found the body of the Chief Factor already partly decomposed. The thought came to him that perhaps the Indians were hiding waiting to kill him

also. Wild with fear he ran to his canoe, pushed it free and paddled with all his strength in the direction of the neighboring trading post. Towards evening he saw a fire on the shore but from the distance he could not distinguish if the people around the campfire were friends or enemies. He let out a call in French and to his delight they answered in the same language. Tourangeau hastened to cross the river and described to them the frightful scene he had just witnessed at the fort.

Such were the dangers which the voyageurs had to risk at the service of the Trading Companies in this immense solitude of the west. This life offered but little attraction to a woman accustomed to the quiet life of eastern Canada.

Marie Ann wintered four consecutive years at Fort Des Prairie, arriving at the post in the fall of 1807. She only returned to the Red River in 1811. During the winters her husband was absent the greatest part of the time hunting and trapping in the surrounding area. He was not engaged in the service of the company but sold his furs and extra meat to them to pay for their lodging. In the spring when the fur season was over they left for the prairies to hunt buffalo. They travelled on horseback and they hauled their belongings on pack horses. Sometimes they rode all day through the bush and prairies before settling down for the night.

When her husband found a good hunting spot, they would pitch their tent and she would rest while he went out for food and look for the buffalo herds.

During the summer the Lagimodieres were camped beside a small river with their friend Belgrade and his native wife. The men went out hunting leaving their wives to look after the camp. During that time a band of Crees passed within sight and seeing their tents decided to stop to find out who was camping there. As soon as Mrs. Belgrade saw them approaching she grabbed Marie Ann's baby and crept into the bush believing that after what had happened at the Fort last fall, they could be in for trouble. They surrounded the tents and the chief of the band dismounted to see who was camped there. Marie Ann was not used to facing the Indians alone. She really believed her final hour had come. The Indian Chief opened the flap of the tent and to his surprise saw a young white woman on her knees. He called Batoche Latendre, who was married to a native woman of the tribe who had been adopted by them, to come and see who was in there. Upon recognizing Marie Ann as a white woman, he hastened to set her mind at rest by telling her that she had

nothing to fear and that he would protect her against any mistreatments from these Indians by saying, "You have nothing to fear, I've lived with these people a long time and I am sure they will do you no harm." Marie Ann was glad to hear these reassuring words, but alone on these prairies surrounded by a band of Indians in search of enemies to scalp, time was desperately long waiting for her husband to come back home. Towards dusk when Jean Baptiste returned with his friend, he was surprised to see so many visitors around his camp. Some were calmly spread on the grass smoking their pipes, while others were attending to their horses who were feeding a short distance away.

At first he feared for the women's safety and wondered what awaited him. But as he got closer to the camp and could not see any movement around the tents he called, "Marie Ann, are you there?" "Yes," she cried, "I'm alive but just about dying of fright." Jean Baptiste could speak their language fluently, advancing boldly therefore after making and receiving a sign of the hand which signified friendship, he begged them to camp a little distance as the women were tired and ill. The Indians, after assuring him that they were friendly and wished he and his family no harm, consented to spend the night a little further away from their encampment.

When they had gone, Mrs. Belgrade returned with the child from the bush, where she had spent the afternoon in hiding and they were all relieved of their fears.

As it was getting late in August, the party started back towards Fort Des Prairies where they were going to spend the winter. Marie Ann was following her husband on horseback, carrying her child in a moss bag strapped on one side of her saddle, on the other side she carried a bag of provisions which by its weight, counterbalanced the child on the other side and kept it from falling.

By this time Marie Ann was a good horsewoman and could ride all day without even stopping for a rest. They had spent most of the summer around Battle River where the buffalo and game were plentiful.

Three days after the adventure with the Indians, they found themselves on a large prairie where large herds of buffalo roamed. One of these herds crossed their path. The presence of this herd produced an astounding effect on her horse and without being urged by its rider, this horse started to chase the herd in a manner that was almost impossible to check. A rider carried thus into the midst of these animals, rushing in a mad race, runs the great danger of being crushed



Courtesy of the Gladstone Institute of Art

The Hudson's Bay Trading Post at Fort Des Prairie in 1800. Later it was called Fort Edmonton and today, it's in the center of Edmonton.

to death by the oncoming herd. Unfortunately on this occasion Marie Ann was riding a horse accustomed to this mode of procedure and as soon as the horse caught sight of these animals, without a thought of its burden, took the bit to its teeth and galloped after the herd. Encumbered by the two bags which hung on each side of the horse, in one of which was her child, the poor woman every minute expected that she would be thrown to the ground and trampled by the buffalo. She prayed to God and clung with all her might to the horse's mane. When Jean Baptiste saw this, he raced after her amongst the racing buffalo. He finally was able to take hold of the horse's bridle and bring the horse to a stop amongst the stampeding herd, just at the point she was about to fall off her horse with fatigue and fright.

This was about midafternoon, so they pitched their tent early to get a much deserved rest, when Marie Ann started getting labour pains. Before the sun set, Jean Baptiste Jr. was born. They nicknamed him Laprairie because he was born on the prairies. The first white child born in Alberta. Three days after the birth of their baby, she mounted her horse and rode to Fort Des Prairies where she remained for the winter.

In early March 1809 Marie Ann had a strange adventure with a native woman of the Blackfoot tribe. One day she went to the river to get a pail of water and left her children in her house unattended. The distance from the fort to the river was not very far but the banks were steep and took at least ten minutes for her to return. Her baby boy Laprairie, was a pretty baby with a nice white complexion and blonde hair and he attracted a great deal of attention from the squaws.

A Blackfoot woman who often came to the Fort noticed him and cast an envious eye on him. In spite of her affection for her own kind she thought this one much more charming than her own and thought she would like to own him. She grabbed him and as she was running she covered him with a blanket. As she was running out of the fort gate Marie Ann was making her way up the hill and saw this native woman running towards her tent. She thought there must be something desperately wrong because seldom do they see a squaw on the run, never suspecting that she was running away with her baby.

At the gate she met Mr. Bird the Chief Factor who asked her why she had left her children alone when Indians were camped nearby. "There is one escaping with a child and it could be yours. Hurry and see if all your children are

there." It only took a second to see that her baby had disappeared and that the squaw must have stolen him. Without asking for help from anyone she dashed after the abductor, reaching her at her tent, grabbing her by the neck and yelling, "Give me back my baby you thief!" The squaw did not understand what she was saying but she knew very well what she meant. When the squaw saw that she was discovered she pretended that she was only carrying him away to play with him and made no resistance to give him back. She could hardly claim him for hers, his complexion would betray her at once. So she let Marie Ann take the child back without any resistance and for the present, gave up her desire of raising a white baby.

In the spring of 1809, in spite of the sorrowful events of the preceding summer, Marie Ann went again with her husband to the prairies. She was beginning to be accustomed to the hardships and the Indians frightened her less than they did at first. How true it is that we become accustomed to all things and in the end attached to our misery. But as one lives and learns, Marie Ann had not yet reached the end of her problems.

Towards the end of June, one of the longest days of summer, Jean Baptiste and Marie Ann camped on the shore of a small lake to spend the night. Next morning when he went to get his horses, although looking all over, he could not find them. He came back for breakfast, then took off on foot to find his wandering horses. Their tracks had to be followed without knowing where they would end and his family would have to be left alone in their tents till he got back not knowing at what time.

He did not return that day and Marie Ann had to pass the night alone. The situation was not very reassuring at the least. If she was attacked by a wild beast or by hostile Indians she could not expect help from anywhere.

The next day about noon a band of Indians, armed with bows and arrows, their faces painted as though they were on the war path, surrounded Marie Ann's camp. These Indians (as we found out after) were on the march to avenge the death of some of their warriors who had been massacred on the previous day by the Crees.

The Lagimodieres' friends, Belgrade, Chalifou, Chappelle and Latendre who had married Cree women were out on the plains trading with the Indians and these Indians who were out to get even with the Crees, massacred these women in cold blood when their husbands were away. All this had